1: Cunningham G-3 (1846-47) 1854 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

Mongolian origin. Their superiority in bodily strength is perhaps owing partly to the bracing climate of their elevated country, and partly to the former infusion of Hindu blood. I have had practical proof of this superiority amongst the Botis of Láhul, Kanáwar, and Spiti. In 1846 the short Láhuli women carried with the greatest ease, day after day, the roof of my tent, which the taller and finer-looking men of Kullu and Simla refused on account of its weight. Again in 1847 the Kanáwari and Spiti women carried loads at which the pampered Simla coolis had grumbled. I have repeatedly seen a box weighing sixty pounds carried by girls of sixteen and eighteen years of age over the high passes of Kanáwar.

Regarding their alleged superiority of stature I am rather sceptical. But as no detailed accounts of the average heights of the different Mongolian races are accessible to me, I can only quote the statement of Pallas, that the Kalmaks are "generally of a moderate height," and "rather small than large." The following table shows the stature of the Boti race in different parts of Ladák and Balti, according to the average measurements of from five to seven persons of each sex in many different villages, always including the tallest and shortest men and women that could be found.

TABLE OF STATURE.

	Districts.	Men.			Women.			Landlords.		
		Tallest.	Shortest.	Average	Tallest.	Shortest.	Average.	Tallest.	Shortest.	Average
		ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.	ft. in.
Buddhists.	Rukchu	5 1·5	5 0·0	5 0·9	5 0·0	4 1·0	4 8·2	5 3·0	5 1·0	5 2·5
	Spiti	5 6·5	5 0·0	5 2·4	5 2·5	4 1·0	4 8·9	5 7·5	5 4·0	5 5·7
	Nubra	5 7·0	5 4·0	5 2·7	4 7·0	4 0·0	4 9·8			
	Ladák	5 5·0	4 10·0	5 1·4	5 4·0	4 1·0	4 10·1	5 9·0	5 2·0	5 5·3
	Average			5 1·8			4 9·2			5 4·5

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

able British Government is paying him some large salary for his services !

Strange is it to see the extraordinary mixture of finery and rags in their religious services, ceremonies and festivals, the rich brocaded Chinese silk gowns of the dancing lamas having little tags of cheapest gaudily-dyed butter muslin attached, while beautiful clothes are surmounted by tinselled hats, the latter the sort of rubbish that children love for " dressing up " in the west. Strange too, is the mixture of clownishness and solemnity, as seen especially at the Hemis festival. In the altars of little private chapels in the homes of the richer Buddhists, the most beautiful metal work will be found side-by-side with a cracked cup or an old tin, while in the matter of dress, dirt and finery often go together, nor do they seem to see the former in demanding a price for a second-hand, one might say an " umpteenth " hand, garment with beautiful Chinese embroidery, but so tattered and frayed and soiled, that a European can only reject it.

So does one thing after the other seem to our ideas the wrong way round in this strange land, where the term *mgologpa* (" head-turned " or " back to front " man) is a common term of reproach. But is it they who are, as it were, the wrong side of the Looking-Glass, or are we ?

Some years ago one of our colleagues in the course of conversation with a Ladaki, referred to their peculiar and distinctive smell, and was filled with surprise and chagrin when he was told that that was quite comprehensible, for we *Pyigling pa* (pronounced Pilingpa, being literally outsiders, *i.e.*, foreigners) had an unpleasant odour in the Ladaki estimation also. Having some idea of the ratio of their ablutions to ours, this was a distinct blow to the Sahibs' vanity !

In attempting to understand this land and people, we must therefore remember that we are the outsiders and ours are extraordinary ideas and standards. After all, is it not wiser to expose your older dress to the daily wear and

13. Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

CHAPTER III

Nature's Setting

IT has often been pointed out that the characteristics of a people are moulded by the country and climate in which they live. Certainly for stolidity and endurance the Ladakis resemble the massive mountains and everlasting hills among which are their dwellings. The "Doctor Sahib" once accompanied a seasoned Alpine climber with his two Swiss guides in an attempt to scale the highest peak in a range of mountains beyond the Indus, facing Leh. The expedition was unsuccessful owing to the inclement weather and the pressure of time, as the mountaineers were on their return to Europe, but they spent two memorable days at the edge of the glacier capping this great peak, at about 18,000 feet in a tumult of wind, thunder, lightning, hail and snow so fierce that the snow was actually driven through the canvas of the Sahibs' little tent. This just accommodated their two beds, and, for the sake of warmth and protection, they remained in these for thirty-six hours. The Swiss guides also had a small tent, but the Ladaki coolies, who had left the main caravan to accompany them, lay down in the snow, covered only with their own garments and apparently took no harm. In the bitter morning of mid-winter, with the thermometer at somewhere below Fahrenheit zero, our Ladaki nurse tells us how, coming through the bazar from her home, she has passed small boys sleeping out in front of the shops as watchmen. Right on the ground, possibly having pushed aside a little snow, with little or no covering

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

but their scanty garments, these small urchins spend the night with only a handful or two of barley-flour as a reward, but they call out a hearty greeting to our nurse as she passes, and neither spirit nor body appears to be chilled by the exposure.

We have already noticed the strange mixture of finery and rags, the incongruity of fine workmanship and adjacent tawdriness. Surely nature herself teaches them this odd combination of the sublime and the ridiculous. Think only of the many examples on the main road up from Srinagar to Leh. As one emerges from the narrow defile which has wound up slowly from Pashkim, just beyond Kargil, to the Mulbeck Valley and about three miles before the village of that name is reached, the gorge opens out into a broad cultivated valley with a great panorama of majestic mountains beyond. Here and there in the foreground are soft sandstone cliffs, behind, strange peaks with jagged pinnacles in their rugged outlines, rising higher yet sinking in perspective as they reach the horizon to stand out clear and sharp against the brilliant azure sky, the whole suggesting some gigantic upheaval of past ages. As one pursues the winding path in and out of soft red-brown sand-hills into the village, the nearer hills and the lower extraordinary formations of sandstone on the further side of the stream come into prominence. These are sculptured by wind, snow and rain into the most grotesque shapes, looking in some places like the ruins of some ancient village or even turretted castles, the rough outlines of the one-time windows presenting the most gnome-like suggestion of a forgotten civilization. In other places the stalagmite-looking relics are more statuesque, and, opposite the sharp turn of the high road to the left, may be seen across the main valley a gigantic looking ruined model of a mother with a child at her knees. Over the pass and into the next village, again straggling along a wide valley, this formation is repeated, and one quaint little cluster of houses

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

233 as if they might be playing a sheepish musical chairs. Actually they have been tied neck to neck, but with alternate heads looking in opposite directions, resulting in such a mix-up of horns, that it looks as though they would never sort out their own again. They are being milked, which done, they are freed by the simple expedient of pulling the end of the rope, when they come undone like a piece of knitting.
377 Looking around the camp we notice sixteen little fires made of
252 *argu*, the dry root which is found on the mountains, whence also the dried dung is collected for fuel. Round the nearest fire, on which Ladaki tea is boiling, sit four Ladakis; at the side of each lies his bag of barley-flour. From the folds of their ample coats they pull their silver-lined wooden cups.
264 These are filled, and kept filled from the teapot by means of a wooden ladle. Instead of flavouring it with sugar, they take out of small bags some butter to add to their tea, and there is no need to ask "Have you put butter in my tea?" for the appetizing layer of grease floating on the top loudly proclaims the fact. Having quenched their thirst, each man fills his cup with some raw flour from his bag, adds sufficient tea to make a thick paste, and then eats it with his fingers. You ask me how they can possibly enjoy such coarse fare, and I can only reply that judging from their laughter, they
●147 evidently do. Whilst we, shivering with cold, stand watching this dinner party, a Changpa strolls up from the river with a can of water. He seems to find the heat oppressive, for he has slipped his right arm out of his sleeve, leaving arm, shoulder and side of chest bare to the gentle breeze. How
511 complex has become our civilization! The Ladaki needs but some dry flour, a little tea, and, with one rug to cover himself by night, is quite happy. If not, he simply takes off his day clothes, which then serve him as blankets by night. If the cold is really bitter three, four, five, six, or even more, sleep together, giving one another warmth. Presumably they do not say "Last in bed puts out the light," but "Last

14: Asboe M-3 (no date) 1947 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

prising that in the rarefied atmosphere of such high altitudes as in Ladakh, where there is little precipitation and the land extremely dry and sandy, the power of the sun is very great. This in turn produces the winds which blow almost constantly from the south and south-westerly directions. The winds on the highlands of Rupshu, for instance, are continuous throughout the year, and they blow with great force when there is not even a vestige of cloud. These winds are dry and extremely cold, since they blow over the glaciers and snow accumulations, so that it may be truly said that Ladakh is in the belt of "windswept Central Asia." When travelling in these regions you cannot fail to observe that when the day is cloudy the strength of the wind is not so great; sometimes, indeed, there is no wind at all, whilst it rises to a gale immediately the skies clear. This is one reason why the traveller in these elevated regions prefers to cross the high passes ranging from 13,000 to 18,000 feet when the sky is overcast. You can never be certain of weather conditions on a pass, but when bad weather is encountered it is easier to tolerate a mist or even heavy snowfall than a powerful wind, which not only impedes progress but chills you to the bone. Long exposure to such a wind, be the sun ever so bright and warm, can reduce your morale and physical energy to a point bordering on collapse.

The peasants of Ladakh are sturdy and cheerful people, inured to long exposure to the sun and wind. Their physical endurance when on their trading expeditions or when carrying heavy loads over a pass in the teeth of a howling wind or blinding blizzard is phenomenal. They contrive to raise crops as good as can be expected considering the unpromising nature of the soil coupled with the difficulties of cultivating them at extremely high altitudes.

The herd instinct, so notably developed in the Tibetans, precludes any effort on the part of the individual to increase his annual output of crops. If a peasant wishes to open up a piece of waste land or contemplates cutting a watercourse to irrigate it, he is obliged to obtain the permission of the community. His well-intentioned plans are usually frustrated by the prejudice and conservatism of the villagers. They at once obstruct him by saying that any such enterprise would interfere with the area required for the pasturage of the communal flocks. The immediate result is that any idea of agricultural progress is strangled at its birth by the tyrannical communal conscience, which is contented to remain *in statu quo* as regards agricultural pursuits.

The practice of interchange of farming implements, such as has been customary from time immemorial, and the borrowing of oxen to till the land, tend to deprive a man of his inalienable right to independence. This is mainly due to the fact that the average Tibetan is too poor to purchase his own farm implements and too indigent to support the number of cattle necessary for the proper development of his farm. The measure of a farmer's wealth is calculated by the number of his horses, sheep, goats, and oxen, as well as the size of his granary. Very little money is passed from hand to hand, labour being paid for in man-power or in grain. Many peasants who have land but not sufficient manure to enrich it sub-let part or the whole of it on the understanding that the tenant

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir W. Tibetans A14

482 With such food and drink as has been described the Ladākhīs
147 are one of the hardiest of races. As coolis, for carrying loads, they are admirable—not only the men but the women too. I have had women employed to carry my baggage, according to the custom of the country, who have done twenty-three or twenty-four miles with sixty pounds on their back, and have come in at the end singing cheerfully. Against cold, too, they are very strong. Not that they equal in this respect the Champās, who live at still greater heights, and can hardly bear to be as low down as 11,000 feet. Still the people of Central Ladākh and of Zānskār are very hardy in this respect also; on a frosty night, with nothing but the clothes they go in, they will coil themselves up and sleep
513 comfortably on the bare stony ground. All have a
515 rooted objection to washing. I was told that there was a custom of bathing once a year, but I could never get any satisfactory corroboration of the report. Their clothes, worn next them, are never washed, but are affectionately kept around them until they fall to pieces.

372 Of the wants rife in a barren country like Ladākh, there are two which (perhaps without, or at all events in addition to, other difficulties) seem to make impossible either any great addition to the population or increase of their comforts. These are want of fuel and want of timber. For fuel the dung of cattle is carefully stored. This is supplemented in some parts by a bush which they pull from the hills that they call *burtse* (Eurotia). This plant is indeed a great resource for travellers in out-of-the-way parts; it is a small low-growing bush, the woody underground stem of which makes a good fuel. Then, in the high valleys, there is a plant like our furze, called *dāma*. On some hill-sides there is the pencil-cedar, a strong-burning wood; and lastly, in certain ravines, there is willow growing wild. All these, however, from their distance, require much labour to collect; they are seldom used by the Ladākhīs in their own houses, but are chiefly got by them for travellers and for the
313 town consumption. The timber-trees are willow and poplar. These are planted either along the watercourses between

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir
W. Tibetans AV4

payment; sometimes it is in cash sometimes in grain; with one or two slight exceptions, all the farinaceous food they consume is imported, Kulū and Lāhol supplying the greater part of it.

The intermediate position of Rupshu is such that many travelling merchants come through the country. The tea-merchants of Lhāsa—a shrewd and eager set of men—yearly come this way with their venture of brick tea for Leh; their merchandise is carried free by the Rupshu people, according to an old arrangement between the authorities of Lhāsa and of Leh, but for their riding and light baggage they have with them a number of fine mules of rare pace. From Kunāwar in the Sutlej Valley come the Kunūs, a people of mixed Tibetan and Indian breed; from Lāhol and Kulū come others of pure and of mixed Tibetan blood; these have in many cases their own sheep to carry their merchandise. Of late years there has been a greater through traffic from the Panjāb to Leh, and even Yārkand, by the road that goes through Rupshu. Panjābī, Pathān, and Yārkandī merchants have all passed this way, which, indeed, as far as the road is concerned, is now the best by far between Eastern Turkistān and the Panjāb. The objection to the route is that the Pass over the Snowy Range may close before the circumstances of the trade allow the merchant to get away from Leh for the downward journey.

Although, then, Rupshu possesses so inhospitable a climate, though it is at one and the same time both parched and bleak, though its hills are barren and its valleys desolate, yet a busy life exists at times in certain portions of it. After travelling for some days without seeing a trace of man, one may come on an encampment of traders with some hundreds of sheep to carry their merchandise, their loads carefully piled up and protected by white tent-cloths; or one may meet on the road the merchants on their ponies, jingling with bells, accompanying their heavy-laden and somewhat unmanageable flock.

For people who are natives of temperate climes, the air of Rupshu in summer, though somewhat trying, is not too severe when the constitution is strong and the system in good order. The extreme cold of winter also could probably be endured if one

J: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AVI Kashmir
W. Tibetans A14

147 had the appliances one is used to where it is much less intense. But the Chāmpās weather it in their tents. The hardiness of these people, the way in which they enjoy rather than endure their climate, is an instance somewhat remarkable of the power of adaptation that the human race possesses. These men consider Leh as a place that should only be approached in winter, and Kashmir as a country hot and unhealthy, much in the same way as we, on better grounds, look on the Gold Coast.

RARITY OF THE AIR.

133* 147 There is one characteristic of Rupshu that is always making itself felt by those who use to dwell at lower altitudes. This is the rarity of the air.

In the valleys water boils at about the temperature of 187°, which corresponds to a barometer-height of 17·8 inches; hence the amount of air—and of oxygen—taken into the lungs with an ordinary inhalation is only $\frac{7}{12}$ths of what would enter them were one at the level of the sea. How this is compensated in the case of the Chāmpās I do not know for certain; I think, for one thing, that there is less waste of tissue in their bodies, as compared with those living in lower and warmer regions; they do not use such an amount of muscular exertion as the people of some of the neighbouring countries; walking it is true they are good at, but they are not always practising it, and loads they will not carry. The tending of flocks and herds is not an occupation that brings the muscles into powerful use. Still this will not account for all; there must be some compensating habit which enables them to take in a large volume of the thin air; probably they have an unconscious way of inhaling deeply.

147 With us the system tries in the simplest and most direct way to make up its wonted supply of oxygen; the breathing becomes both quicker and more powerful, that is to say there is an effort to increase both the number of inhalations and the volume of each. The intensity of this effect increases with every rise when once above the altitude where one's ordinary breathing—or an increase in it which is not enough to produce a consciousness

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir
W. Tibet aps A14

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of change—suffices. At the greater heights, besides the feeling of oppression and shortness of breath, there comes on a headache and feeling of sickness such as one often has at the beginning of fever or sea-sickness, but this is not accompanied by either increased heat or cold of the body. With some, at the higher levels, vomiting comes on, but serious results do not seem to follow, and relief is felt almost at once on descending to a lower level.*

The height at which these effects are observed varies much, and it is not always easy to trace the cause of the irregularities. A great deal depends on habit of body; a man in good condition will hold out much higher than one who is unused to exercise. One first notices it when using some more than ordinary exertion, as when running or when walking up hill; in this way, for people who live below 6000 feet, the effects generally come on between 11,000 and 12,000 feet. At 14,000 and 15,000 feet one is liable, at times, to have an attack, as it were, of shortness of breath even when in repose. When I first visited Rupshu (15,000 feet), this came upon me when lying down at night and lasted for half an hour or so; but after a week I got over that liability, and never afterwards, when at rest, felt a want of breath, even when the camp was 2000 or 3000 feet higher still. Again, I have known a native of the Panjāb—one it is true little used to physical exertion—have a like attack at 11,000 feet. But though one may get so far used to the rarity of the air as not to feel it thus, yet any but the most ordinary exertion will surely remind one of it. At 15,000 feet the least slope upward in the path will make one as much out of breath as if one were, at a lower altitude, pressing up a steep mountain side. Talking when walking, even on a level, soon brings its own conclusion from want of breath. And when one comes to the greater heights—for here every thousand feet distinctly tells—ascending a slope becomes a painful labour. I have crossed a pass at 19,500 feet (one that lower down would have been an easy walk) where, on the ascent, at every fifty or

* This is only true if the organs are thoroughly sound; the rarity is very likely to find out any defect in either the lungs or the heart.

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir
W. Tibetans A14

147 sixty steps, one was absolutely obliged to halt and pant to recover breath; then, however, I felt neither headache nor other bad effect; the usage of a month or two at high levels had done something to harden one to the circumstances.

The natives whose lot occasionally leads them into the highlands, very commonly attribute these results of rarefied air to some plant, which, for the purposes of their argument, they invest with the power of poisoning the air. Some of the herbs at high elevations give out a smell when rubbed, and these are brought in to account for the sickness. The much-abused onion, which grows wild in some parts at a good height up, often has these things laid to it. Of course an easy answer to this hypothesis is that the effect is greatest at those heights whence all these plants, and even all vegetation, are absent.

THE SALT LAKE VALLEY.

133* We will now begin to examine in detail various portions of Rupshu and some of the physical phenomena which it presents, commencing with the Salt Lake Valley. This is the widest opening in the whole of Rupshu; the length, in a direction north-north-west and south-south-east, is 13 miles, and along a considerable part of that length the valley is five miles wide; the level of it is 14,900 feet. It is a flat surrounded by hills, occupied partly by land and partly by water. The original outlet—an opening between the hills on the north-west—is now filled up to some 70 feet above the plain, so that there is no passage for the waters that collect in the valley, which, therefore, with its enclosing hills, forms a separate drainage-basin. The hills are for the most part low in comparison with the mountains we have met with, all are bare of visible vegetation; as a rule they are not rugged, but have smooth surfaces of loosened stones. The surface of the plain is varied; in parts there is sand and gravel; in other parts an expanse of white clay; this again is sometimes caked with a thin covering, still whiter, of salts, various in composition; lastly, a not inconsiderable portion is occupied by two lakes—about a square mile by the one of them

* [See CAT. 116, pp. 290-291.—ANALYST]

3: Imperial Gazetteer G-3 (1889-95) 1909 AV1 Kashmir
W. Tibetans AJ4

scattered and scanty willows and poplars which grow along the watercourses.

There can be little doubt that the modest prosperity of the Ladākhis, in contrast to the universal poverty of Baltistān, is due to the practice of polyandry, which acts as a check on population. Whereas the Baltis, used to the extremes of temperature, are able to seek employment in hot countries, the Ladākhis would die if they were long away from their peculiar climate. In a family where there were many brothers, the younger ones could neither marry nor go abroad for their living. When the eldest son marries, he takes possession of the little estate, making some provision for his parents and unmarried sisters. The eldest son has to support the two brothers next him in age, who share his wife. The children of the marriage regard all three husbands as father. If there be more than two younger brothers, they must go out as Lāmas to a monastery, or as coolies; or, if he be fortunate, a younger son can marry an heiress, and become a Magpa. (If there is no son in a family the daughter inherits, and can choose her own husband, and dismiss him at will with a small customary present. The Magpa husband is thus always on probation, as the heiress can discard him without any excuse or ceremony of divorce.) When the eldest dies or becomes a Lāma, the next brother takes his place. But the wife, provided there are no children, can get rid of his brothers. She ties her finger by a thread to the finger of her deceased husband. The thread is broken, and she is divorced from the corpse and the surviving brothers. The woman in Ladākh has great liberty and power. She can, if she likes, add to the number of her husbands. Drew, who had a very intimate knowledge of Ladākh, thinks that polyandry has had a bad effect on the women, making them overbold and shameless. But others, who are equally entitled to form an opinion, consider this an unfair criticism.

In the town of Leh are many families of half-castes known as Arguns, the results of the union between Ladākhi women and Kashmīris, Turkī caravan-drivers, and Dogrās. The Dogrā children were known as Ghulāmzādas, and were bondmen to the State. The half-castes of Leh are no more unsatisfactory in Tibet than elsewhere, and many travellers have testified to the good qualities of the Argun.

The monasteries (*Gompa*) play an important part in the life of the Ladākhis. Nearly every village has its monastery, generally built in a high place difficult of access. At the entrance are prayer cylinders, sometimes worked by water-